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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Chief Financial Officer
Assistant Secretary for Administration
Washington, D.C. 20230

MEMORANDUM FOR See Distribution List

FROM: Lisa *Casias*
 Acting Deputy Chief Financial Officer and
 Director for Financial Management

SUBJECT: Department of Commerce Policy Regarding the Use of
 Appropriated Funds for Food at Formal Government-Sponsored
 Conferences

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has issued an opinion relating to the use of appropriated funds to pay for food at formal conferences sponsored by federal agencies (B-300826, March 3, 2005). As set forth in GAO's opinion, appropriated funds may be used to pay for refreshments or meals for attendees—whether federal employees or private citizens—at a formal conference sponsored by a federal agency under certain circumstances. In general, such expenditures are allowable if three criteria are met:

- (1) meals and refreshments must be incidental to the conference;
- (2) attendance when meals or refreshments are served is important for the host agency to ensure full participation in discussions, lectures, or speeches that are essential to the conference; and
- (3) the conference includes substantial activities or functions in addition to those activities involving food.

The attachment to this memorandum sets forth detailed policy guidance in applying this decision to expenditures incurred by the Department of Commerce pending revision of Department Administrative Order 203-10. "Official Entertainment and Representation Authorizations."

Please feel free to direct any questions that you may have to me at 202-482-1207. Thank you.

Attachments

cc: Elise Packard, Office of General Counsel
Operating Unit Chief Financial Officers/Chief Administrative Officers

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